

## Full Council 5 September 2023

### Members Questions

#### **Questions from Cllr Bullivant**

##### Questions to the Executive Member for Climate Change

*There are increasing public concerns about the costs associated with some of the plans to reduce CO2 levels. It is important that the public are aware of the investments that this council has made over the last 4 years in value for money terms as they pay through their taxes for these investments made by TDC therefore can you provide the answers to the questions below:-*

*In making decisions about investment to reduce the carbon footprint of this council*

*1 - A) what is the maximum capital cost per tonne of CO2 saved that is used in the decision making process that is used to justify an investment*

#### **Response from the Executive Member for Climate Change**

The Authority doesn't use a maximum cost per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> metric in the decision making process. Instead, the approach to prioritising carbon reduction projects is based on monitoring of the Authority's carbon footprint, which serves to identify carbon hotspots arising from Authority-delivered services, and forms a basis for actions set out in the adopted Part 1 Carbon Action Plan. Where projects are funded through borrowing, a business case must demonstrate a minimum return of 1% over the project lifetime.

[Part 1 Carbon Action Plan \(teignbridge.gov.uk\)](https://teignbridge.gov.uk)

*2 - B) what is the internationally accepted social value of achieving a tonne of CO2 saving*

#### **Response from the Executive Member for Climate Change**

The Department for Business and Industrial Strategy has published figures on the social value of carbon in [Table 3 of the Green Book Supplementary Guidance](#); one tonne of carbon has been valued at between £126/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> and £378/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> in 2023, with cost projections provided up until 2050.

#### **Questions from Cllr Farrand-Rogers**

*Question to the Leader*

*3) At the last full meeting of the Council, during the debate on the closure of train ticket windows at railway stations, it was observed that in this country we are currently creating a class of second-class citizens – those who do not have iphones and do not have access to the internet. Many organisations and institutions are guilty of making assumptions about the access to these instruments, not least the*

*government itself. It was requested that the officers should inform the Executive how many of the Council's normal services cannot be paid for by cash.*

*To the Leader of the Council: How many of the Council's transactions cannot be paid for by cash?*

### **Response from the Leader**

These are the transactions which **cannot** be paid for with cash:

- First time garden waste subscription (once they have subscribed once, the customer is sent a renewal letter with a barcode they can take to a PayPoint to pay with cash)
- Parking permits
- Devon Building Control payments
- Personal licenses (payment over phone, or BACS)
- Small society lottery (payment over phone, or BACS)
- Taxi drivers license (pay on card via firmstep)
- New vehicle application and vehicle renewals (pay on card via firmstep)
- Environmental Health service fees (revisits)
- Planning applications
- Service fee charges for temporary accommodation
- Private Sector Housing services for HMO – licensing and grant repayments

*Question to the Executive Member for Sport, Recreation and Tourism*

**4)** *Recently the Council invited applications for support with the cost of running swimming pools which are open to the public in different parts of the District.*

*To the Exec Member for Leisure etc: How many requests have been received, and how much has been requested by each one?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

If the question relates to the grants offered to pools from TDC, then six pools (Ashburton, Chudleigh, Bovey Tracey, Buckfastleigh, Kingsteignton and Moretonhampstead) received the normal £2500.00 plus an additional £5860.00 from the Lido savings last year whilst the site was closed to complete the decarbonisation investment works.

However, if the question refers to the more recent Sport England support fund applications, then Sport England and DCMS do not allow any information to be released.

## **Questions from Cllr Macgregor**

*According to the Royal Bank of Scotland 'business activity index, the South West of England like the South East of England saw a decline in business activity in July.*

*5) What plans can be put in place by the 'economy and assets' team to assist the multitude of existing and new, micro/small businesses across the District to help them survive in a climate of contraction in the economy?*

## **Response from the Executive Member for Economy & Culture**

- The Council successfully bid for UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding and are managing a budget of £2.2m. A good proportion of this money will go to local businesses, initially through the Green Business Grant programme where we fund businesses of any kind to purchase advice or a piece of kit that will enable them to reduce their energy costs. Phase one of this scheme was oversubscribed, and we continue to monitor the results. There are two more phases of this scheme but these are yet to run, as we receive this money from the Department for Homes, Levelling Up and Communities in tranches.
- A quarterly e-newsletter, the 'Business Brief', is distributed and provides businesses with a wealth of information relating to grants, training, events etc.
- Any business contacting us requiring specialist advice is signposted to The Growth Hub or Business Information Point where they will receive free advice that exactly suits their needs.
- The Economic Development team work with local business groups and make links with others who can help businesses move forward.
- The Economic Development team works with developers to assist them to locate and create new business space (e.g. Oak Tree Park and Sands Copse – a total of 16 acres, all fully let). The team also work with individual businesses and commercial agents to find relocation space, which can enable them to grow the business and create new jobs.
- Demand for workspace remains high proving that the businesses in Teignbridge continue to thrive.
- The team work with towns in an effort to increase footfall in our town centres through various schemes.
- A survey will be sent to all businesses over the coming months to ask how they are faring post Covid and what help they need, if any? We are aware that local businesses are struggling to recruit, although this is a problem for them it does prove that these businesses are thriving.
- The Council own and operate the Teignbridge Business Centre (TBC) at Heathfield. This building provides much needed starter office and Industrial Units. Many, now successful businesses in the District started life at TBC.
- The Senior Economic Development Officer attends monthly meetings with the local MP, which is also attended by representatives from business and the towns and is an opportunity to lobby on behalf of local business. TDC are keen that the government continues to support early years businesses and smaller enterprises by continuing with the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. This scheme has made a huge difference to the ability of smaller businesses in formal commercial space to operate without the worry of paying extortionate business rates.

- TDC have operated an Economic Development Team for over 35 years, as a result most businesses know who we are and how to contact us.

*6) How many retail and business units, other than the market HALL does Teignbridge own and manage directly, or indirectly?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

*7) How many of those are currently empty?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

*8) How many are scheduled to fall empty in the next 12 months?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

*9) What is the current average length of time a property (business unit or retail unit) lies empty?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

*10) What is the plan to obtain tenants for these empty business/retail units?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

*11) What advertising and promotion is taking place to ensure we are creatin interest?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

A Verbal response will be given.

**Questions from Cllr Bullivant**

*12) In light of the recent government announcement that to ensure the safety and dignity of females all toilets and facilities in public buildings should have separate places for men, women and families will the plans published be changed to comply with this requirement.*

*The announcement from the government is as follows:-*

*All new non-domestic public and private buildings will be required to provide separate single-sex toilets for women and men or self-contained, private toilets.*

*The government has announced that it is bringing forward changes to Building Regulations stipulating the new requirements, which will ban gender-neutral toilets with multiple cubicles.*

*The government said the move was in response to concerns for the dignity and privacy of women and elderly people, who feel they are being unfairly disadvantaged as publicly accessible toilets are increasingly being converted into gender-neutral facilities.*

*The rise of gender-neutral facilities has meant the public had been forced to share cubicle and hand-washing facilities, leading to increasing waiting in shared queues, decreased choice and a limitation on privacy and dignity, the government said.*

*The changes will be made through Building Regulations and accompanying guidance. The new requirements will ensure that:*

- separate single-sex toilet facilities are provided for men and women and/or;*
- self-contained, private toilets are provided;*
- mixed-sex shared facilities will be banned, except when lack of space allows only a single toilet.*

*The new regulations and guidance will mean women, who may need to use facilities more often because of pregnancy or sanitary needs, will now be guaranteed appropriate facilities, the government added.*

*In addition to single-sex toilets becoming the default for new non-residential buildings and places undertaking major refurbishment, the guidelines will encourage the consideration of self-contained toilets, which are a fully enclosed toilet room with a hand basin for individual use.*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

The information is acknowledged and will be considered alongside the feedback from the July Full Council meeting as part of the forthcoming more detailed design stages.

### **Question from Cllr Farrand-Rogers**

*13) Moretonhampstead Parish Council has received numerous complains about the state of the car park in Court Street, Moretonhampstead, in particular the weeds. It does not give the right impression of an area where tourism is one of the main economic activities. They took this up with Teignbridge District Council at the beginning of May, but so far no action has been taken.*

*Question to the Exec member for Open Spaces etc: Is there any particular reason why this car park has not been tidied up?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

Ground maintenance contract obligations for Court Street car park Moretonhampsted are as follows

One area of medium standard grass – cut on a six week frequency .

Two shrubs beds – 2 visit per year.

1 hedge – cut once per season between Nov – Feb

Hard surface weed treatment is not part of the G.M contract but arranged separately, last treatment was 20<sup>th</sup> April , we try to avoid a follow up treatments if possible as we are actively trying to reduce the use of glyphosate across the district.

### **Question from Cllr Bullivant**

*14) Rent subsidies*

*Can details of the total value of rent subsidies be given broken down to show the amount by each ward plus the amounts granted in addition by parish, town or district councils to each facility.*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Services**

A Verbal response will be given.

### **Questions from Cllr Macgregor**

*It was announced on Friday 25th August via the resident's update that Teignmouth Lido was shutting early ahead of the season closure date due to a a leak. Quite rightly the team took the decision on safety grounds as both the water level in the pool was dropping and water pressure into the changing area including showers and toilets had also dropped.*

*The Lido underwent a significant investment due to decarbonisation grants which included an air source heat pump, new water filtration and pump system, as well as solar panels installed on structures over the poolside area. Obviously with such an investment in the facility it is disappointing that it is not going to available for the full season.*

*15) Has the leak been identified yet, and will this be treated as a priority with an update provided to users as soon as the problem has been identified?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

The leak has not yet been identified. It was observed just prior to the Bank Holiday weekend. An engineer completed an initial review and is due to return to complete further exploratory works. As ever, communications will follow with further updates.

*16) If the leak is identified as coming from the works associated with the investment and improvements noted above, will the contractors who installed it be contacted to rectify it?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

If that was indeed the case, then yes. However, the issues need to be confirmed in detail before the appropriate resolution can be achieved.

*17) Will the PH give an absolute assurance that the Lido will remain a valued community asset and every effort made to ensure it is open for next year's season?*

**Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

Yes

*18) Recently, both the Portfolio Holder and Leader of the council attended celebrations/photoshoots relating to community asset successes delivered through the hard work of officers and contractors. Whilst it is always fantastic to see the outcome of their work, the emphasis seems to be on photo-opportunities for the current administration.*

*As a previous portfolio holder, I ensured that ward members were invited to these events, even where the invites went to people I disagree with politically. The Leader informed everyone in the first Full Council of this administration that he would focus on making Teignbridge a council for the community.*

*why are ward councillors being excluded from events in their wards?*

**Response from the Leader**

To the best of my knowledge there has been one recent occasion when a photograph of a green flag was taken with the portfolio holder at Decoy Park and to which ward members were not invited. This photograph was arranged by officers at short notice to support the national green flag announcement and inviting ward members was unfortunately overlooked. I am sorry for this oversight.

The most recent event organised by the council was the opening of Ridgetop Park to which all ward members were invited.

The comms team will always try to ensure that ward members are invited to any events in which they are involved in the organisation.

**19)** *At the last full council on the 25th July 2023, a notice of motion (motion number 2) stated...*

*"It is proposed that the council rescind all delegation of authority for the future High Street fund projects excluding Queen Street and the cycle route improvements.*

*The delegated authority is to be replaced with staged delegation is based on the project plans. Milestones achieved or missed add permission to be sweet proceed to the next milestone will be overseen by the executive committee and reported back to full council."*

*It ends with*

*"It is not the intention to stop the work to deliver the projects in a timely manner."*

*Nowhere did it mention that there was to be a shift of portfolio holder control from Cllr Jeffries (who had overseen the project to that point) to Cllr Martin Wrigley as leader of the council.*

*Why was the extremely important aspect of a change in portfolio responsibility excluded from consideration as part of the motion?*

### **Response from the Leader**

A Verbal response will be given.

**20)** *Why (and I wish to apologise to Cllr Jeffries for an incorrect position I took at that last meeting regarding her expertise) has the leader removed the FHSF project from the oversight of the one PH with experience in the delivery of large development projects and replaced it with someone who has experience in IT and software application development?*

### **Response from the Leader**

A Verbal response will be given.

**21)** *As there are Highways matters to be considered in delivery of the project, does the leader understand the meaning of conflict of interest?*

### **Response from the Leader**

A Verbal response will be given.



*22) Once again, I see the message repeated to residents that it is their responsibility to be 'dog safe' around dogs, rather than put the emphasis on the dog owners to ensure that their dogs are under control. This was issued in the residents newsletter and gives three points for residents to consider. Whilst this advice is helpful for residents using parks, it's noteworthy that the emphasis is not on the dog owners to keep their dogs on leads in public places, to keep dogs on short leads at all times when walking on highways (that includes paths that are designated highways, cycle paths, pavements and roads), to have dogs under control at all times. Many people (and also other dogs) are afraid of dogs and we see many incidents of dogs running up to people out of control and off the lead.*

*Why is the emphasis on non-dog owners, rather than dog owners?*

*23) Why do we not remind dog owners of their responsibilities regarding, laws, by-laws and common decency?*

### **Response to questions 22 and 23 from the Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

The 'dog safe' national campaign is run by the CFSG (Canine & Feline Sector Group) which brings together a number of organisations involved in dog safety and dog care.

The recent messaging in the residents' update promoted this national campaign and the [Dog Safety Code](#) which is primarily aimed at dog owners but is relevant to all residents.

The three points in the residents' update of 25 August were relevant to dog and non-dog owners and related to the national campaign, not our local PSPO. We always seek to support national campaigns where relevant to Teignbridge residents.

An article reminding all residents of the requirements of the PSPO will be included in the residents' update in the coming weeks.

*24) What enforcement is being taken over dog owners who are not behaving appropriately and responsibly?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Open Spaces, Leisure, Sport, Resorts and Tourism**

The council has three Community Environment Wardens who have responsibility for all environmental crime issues as well as being the dog warden for their area. They undertake a number of proactive and reactive measures to tackle issues with dogs which I have listed below.

- Regular patrols of hot spot areas including parks, town and village streets and beaches.

- Partnership working with Dartmoor National Park rangers and neighbourhood policing teams
- Partnership working with the Green Spaces through positive engagement with dog owners using our parks and open spaces.
- Regular publicity about how to report issues via social media and our residents newsletters.
- Enforcement activity through the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for witnessed breaches of the Public Spaces Protection Order.
- Multi Agency enforcement activity with our Anti-Social behaviour officer through the issuing of Community Protection Warnings for dog owners whose lack of control of their dog(s) is impacting the community

### **Questions from Cllr Lake**

*25) Can the portfolio holder for planning explain why despite mentioning to me on leaving the meeting why I still haven't had written reply to my supplementary question .*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

Reply has been in the Members Newsletter.

*26) Can the Leader of the Council explain why a million pound scheme including the ridgeway park opening recently for the SWE development was so poorly advertised to the general media ? Resulting in a very disappointing event when it should be shouted from the rooftops ! The car parking issue was not related to this as adequate spaces were available and the three year rolling plan of development of the park too was not a reason for such a poor event , In unison can he explain why no photos inclusive of Ward members( myself only in attendance ) was organised ?*

### **Response from the Leader**

The Ridgetop Park opening event included invites provided directly to the hundreds of new residents living in the neighbouring new developments. Posters advertising the event were also kindly displayed by Exminster Parish Council.

The second small car park for Ridgetop Park, within the Cavanna development, had just been made publicly available and so the capacity had increased from the existing Trood Lane car park of 17-spaces to a collective 36-spaces. Showcasing the park needs to be carefully managed as parking capacity grows. We know, from experience of 17,000 visitors a month to Dawlish Countryside Park, how popular these new spaces can be. The opening of Dawlish Countryside Park was advertised more widely and despite more parking being available at the time the event was only just manageable in terms of attendance and capacity.

The Ridgetop Park event enabled us to meet more local residents and to hear their thoughts about the site and how they interact with it. This has been useful and will support the ongoing delivery of the site as it continues to evolve. It was also a chance to thank those who have had active and supportive engagement in the delivery of the project to-date. There are two further small car parks to be delivered

at Ridgetop park, as part of the phased delivery. There will be further opportunity for an event to open the full extent of the site in due course.

There were photos captured of the sundial unveiling and then attendees were welcomed to the main marquee for a hot drink and cream tea where there were collective photographs captured of those who were able to remain following the unveiling. There was [very positive press released following the event](#), to publicise the site to a much wider audience now that the second small car park is available and to encourage more people to visit and engage with the site and the amazing views.

*27) Can the portfolio holder for Environment give a cast iron assurance to Teignbridge residents that he will pursue a free garden waste scheme promised during past electioneering and the date it will be introduced ? Considering his Leadership has overseen increases of over 180% in the Green bin charge since its inception*

### **Response from Executive Member for Recycling, Household Waste & Environmental Health**

I am not aware of any assurance of a free garden waste collection scheme over the past nine years (two elections), and we await the outcome of the government's Consistency in Collections review for any decision on a revised garden waste collection policy.

*28) Can the portfolio holder also assure council it will not dash headlong into environmentally currently in vogue , rush into purchasing ,unproven and, unreliable ( data from ECC ) and ,unrealistic ( due to rural nature majority of Teignbridge ) expectations of Electric Dustcarts or Recycling vehicles and therefore burden the hard pressed Teignbridge tax payer with potentially white elephants ?*

### **Response from Executive Member for Recycling, Household Waste & Environmental Health**

I refer Cllr Lake to the report presented to Full Council on 8 August 2023 with the recommended Option 4 that does not propose electric vehicles for Waste & Recycling Large Goods Vehicles.

*29) Can the Leader of the Council concur despite no official protocol or requirement ,that ward councillors that have been entrusted with the votes of their population should attend their local Parish meetings however many, as regularly as possible and, agree this is the place that local issues more often than not come to light rather than direct public to councillor contact Does he also agree Ward councillors should make themselves easily assessable to their public and that just providing email is not inclusive when many older residents do not have access to such ?*

### **Response from the Leader**

A Verbal response will be given.